

REMARKS

The above Amendments and following remarks are responsive to all the points of rejection raised by the Examiner in the final Office Action dated September 24, 2003. Claims 1-9 are currently pending in the application. No amendments have been made to the claims. Entry and consideration of this Amendment are respectfully requested.

Statement Of The Substance Of Interview

On January 16, 2004, an interview was conducted between Examiner Ton and the undersigned regarding potentially distinguishable features between claims 1, 8 and 9 of the present invention and the Sato reference applied in the Examiner's rejections.

Response To Rejections Under § 102:

In the Office Action, claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Sato (U.S. Patent No. 5,816,680). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections for the following reasons.

The present invention as recited in claims 1, 8 and 9 teaches a plurality of reflective sub-areas that are obliquely oriented with respect to each other, which is a feature not disclosed by Sato.

In the Office Action, the Examiner relies on Fig. 4 for disclosing the above feature. The Examiner specifically states that the reflective surfaces 26a1-26a5 in Sato "do not appear to be perpendicular nor parallel to each other, suggesting obliqueness with respect to each other." Applicants respectfully disagree. It appears that the Examiner may have overlooked a key feature of the step-like reflective surface in Sato that is more clearly illustrated in Fig.1. In Fig.1

and the corresponding description thereof, the step-like reflective surface is described as being comprised of both reflective (e.g. 26A3 and 26A4) and non-reflective (22A) sub-surfaces. In other words, if the step-like reflective surface were likened to an actual step, the riser (longitudinal surface) would be the reflective surface and the step or landing (latitudinal surfaces) would be the non-reflective surface. Thus, it logically following that if one considers only the reflective surfaces as claimed, they would in fact be parallel to each other, not oblique as suggested by the Examiner. This argument is further supported by other teachings of Sato. Specifically, Sato states that the light reflected by the reflective surfaces 26A1-26A5, 26B1, 26B2 is radiated parallel and toward the front of the reflector 16 (col. 3, lines 13-27 and col. 6, lines 35-44).

Accordingly, claims 1, 8 and 9 are believed to be distinguishable over Sato at least for the reasons noted above. Likewise, claims 2-7 are also believed to be distinguishable over Sato based on their dependency on claim 1.

CONCLUSIONS

In view of the above amendments and arguments, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are patentable over the prior art of record, and are now in condition for allowance.

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Reply to the final Office Action mailed Sep. 24, 2003

AUTHORIZATIONS

A check for \$110.00 is enclosed to cover the fees for one-month extension of time.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees associated with this filing to Deposit Account No. 13-4503, Order No. 1948-4758. Likewise, any overpayment is credited to Deposit Account No. 13-4503, Order No. 1948-4758.

Respectfully submitted,
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